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Attachment # 6
Page 1 of 4

Original sent to P.A.

June 7, 2002

INDIVIDUAL LETTERS SENT TO:

Leon County Commissioners
City of Tallahassee Commissioners and Mayor
Local Legislative Delegation

I want to provide you Florida State University's thinking about a concept that I hope you will find exciting and worthy of your support. That concept is the development of a major new research park located in the southern part of our city and just a short distance from our main University campus. The idea, that we have tentatively called "University Park," would be fully consistent with the goals and directions inherent in a "southern strategy" for Tallahassee and with the recommendations in the highly-successful public and private planning effort captured in the Blueprint 2000 and Beyond.

Such a concept would also address other significant issues facing our community and Florida State University. Economic development is a critically important topic that is constantly on the minds and agendas of many of our citizens and leaders. We see FSU -- through its research, educational, and service roles--playing an important role related to economic development within this community and the State of Florida. Also, the realization of this concept would allow FSU the much-needed space for expansion of research and educational activities that will stimulate further economic growth.

The planning for this concept is potentially large and complex. In growing communities, large tracts of undeveloped lands are often difficult to identify. This is magnified when one hopes to find such land near key areas such as an existing university campus; where transportation and environmental issues can be accommodated; residential disruptions are minimized; and economic development strategies are consistent with community input in the planning phases. I believe that we are consistent with stated economic development strategies as articulated in the "southern strategy" and with the transportation

and environmental directions of Blueprint. I also know that concerns will emerge and hurdles will be confronted; with appropriate input into our planning, it is our hope that these can be addressed and a University Park can become a reality.

What is this concept specifically? We envision an approximately 1500-acre park in which research and other related activities would be conducted. Such a University Park would potentially encompass properties adjacent and to the west of the roughly 225 acre Innovation Park site. Adjacent properties, which include the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, FSU's Alumni Village, the FSU Broadcast Center, and the FSU Seminole Golf Course. In addition, FSU has additional undeveloped and vacant properties further to the west. Our land holdings in this area are approximately 700 acres. There is some additional State property, controlled by the Florida Department of Transportation, of approximately 65 acres; City properties of approximately 150 acres; County property of about 65 acres; and several private large and smaller tracts (mostly bordering the north side of Orange Avenue) of approximately 125 acres.

As planning begins, broad input from all affected communities will be sought and considered. Our thinking rests on the foundation of a true local government/university partnership. We have and will continue to aggressively pursue and formalize a partnership with the officials from the city of Tallahassee and Leon County. We will need state support in many areas. The Innovation Park Board's support will be important.

Remaining true to the goals and directions of the "southern strategy" and Blueprint will be critical to success. And broad public input into the planning will be necessary and will lead to a better end-product.

We propose to initiate the planning process by engaging the Urban Land Institute, a leading organization with broad national and international membership among the urban planning professionals, to accept this University Park project as a planning project. Based on the nature of an urban planning project, ULI assembles a team of experts from around the Nation to visit the local community, initiate discussions with key individuals involved or affected by aspects of the local project, and provides a set of recommendations on how to best accomplish the project, options to consider as the project progresses, decisions that need to be made and by whom, and timelines and sequences for those decisions and actions. We are in discussions with ULI about this next phase, about our partnership approach, and about them accepting our application for undertaking the University Park project in Tallahassee.

I have shared our preliminary thinking on a University Park concept. I want to add that the properties located in this 1500-acre conceptual area are included, without regard to current ownership. Discussions with some of the affected public or private owners have not taken place as yet. However, the intent of this communication to you is to provide you with our initial thinking on

this concept and ask your thoughtful consideration of it. More formal presentations and discussions will follow, but I felt that this initial alert to you was necessary to begin the process of talking about this exciting concept and opportunity.

I would certainly be pleased to talk with you about this idea and answer any questions I can, knowing there may be more questions than answers at this early stage. The intense planning process we envision should provide us some of the consensus we need. We have been strongly encouraged by the leadership of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Council, and several of the volunteers who led the Blueprint 2000 campaign and we are confident that this concept has their support. Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Talbot D'Alemberte
President

cc: Chair and Co-Chair, FSU Board of Trustees
Chair, Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce
Chair, Capitol City Chamber of Commerce
Chair, Tallahassee/Leon County Economic Development Council
City Manager, City of Tallahassee
County Administrator, Leon County
President, Council of Neighborhood Associations
Chair, Leon County Research and Development Authority Board
Chair, Economic and Environmental Consensus Committee

Posted on Wed, Jun. 12, 2002

**FSU eyes proposed research park
Project could have 'significant economic impact' on south side
By Melanie Yeager
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER
TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT**

Short on campus space and eager to generate economic development, Florida State University wants to develop a new 1,500-acre research park on the south side of Tallahassee.

And school officials have set their sights on more than 400 acres that are primarily owned by the city, county and state.

If landowners were willing to "throw their land in with ours," said FSU President Sandy D'Alemberte, together they could plan and build a large park that would focus on, but not be limited to, research activities.

"We'd have something that really might command a lot of support," D'Alemberte said Tuesday. "You'd have a project of significant economic impact."

The concept, which is loosely defined so far, is based on North Carolina State University's Centennial Campus, a 1,334-acre site that features research facilities, business incubators and an executive conference center and hotel.

The FSU project - dubbed University Park - would stretch west and south of Innovation Park, home of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, said Ray Bye, FSU vice president for research. FSU already owns about 700 acres in that area, including Alumni Village, a university-owned apartment complex primarily for graduate and international students; the FSU Broadcast Center; and the Don Veller Seminole Golf Course.

"There's no reason to think we can't work toward this kind of goal to have not just a campus, but a park that has academic and private sector buildings on it. It could have a hotel. I think there are a lot of options out there," Bye said. "Somehow you've got to get an entity that is responsible for it. I think that's a decision that the local elected officials have got to make."

Last week, D'Alemberte sent a letter outlining the idea to local elected officials. D'Alemberte and Bye have held several private conversations with mostly economic development leaders. Bye will give a presentation to county and city commissioners Thursday afternoon during a bus tour of development projects.

D'Alemberte said FSU sees the proposed park as one solution to expanding research space on its cramped campus. With its 453-acre main campus, FSU is the smallest university in the state system, Bye said.

Both men said more university development south of Innovation Park would help the south side's economy.

Research facilities will lead to more jobs and improve the county's tax base, Bye said.

And D'Alemberte said the project will be different from those by developers such as St. Joe Co.

"We really need to let people understand we're not trying to build a giant office park, an industrial site or a manufacturing site. The other people doing that are going about it in the right way. What we think we'll be doing here is something complementary."

FSU's proposal fits with plans for that part of town, said Henree Martin, a member of the committee that wrote the Blueprint 2000 report outlining a wide range of environmental and transportation projects planned for Leon County. Those projects, which include widening Capital Circle and purchasing land for stormwater, are being paid for by the local sales tax extension that runs from 2004 to 2019.

"One of Blueprint 2000's primary objectives is economic development on the south side of town," Martin said.

"This enhances that. This brings more positive things to the southern part of town."

FSU's plans may affect how officials decide to realign southwest Capital Circle.

"We may adjust so it works better with the park," Martin said.

FSU wants its plans to be in line with what city and county planners have already started, D'Alemberte said.

"All we're suggesting at this stage is that we start a planning process, that we come together and try to answer all the questions," D'Alemberte said. "(We're) not prepared right now to tell you what the plan ought to look like."

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